

The Outlaw Trail

Tape #107

I'd like to welcome all of you here today. Want to apologize for not having any lights. While we were hooking up all this electric equipment up here, the multi-breaker switch blew out on the lights and no one can get to the multi-breaker. Most of our program is going to be on film anyway, so I don't think you'll miss having the lights. This is our new speaking system, isn't that the neatest thing? We just bought this, and it's going to be for any of our meetings or programs and especially to take in the tour buses when we go on tour this summer so everyone in the back seat of the bus can hear what the tour guide is saying when we go along.

Minutes from last month's meeting:

Mildred: Minutes of the meeting held March 10th, 1984 at 2 pm. Conducting, Thelma Thacker the president, welcomed the large group present and introduced Troy and Doris Burton company who were to present the program. Minutes of the February meeting were read by the secretary and approved. The time was turned over to the Burtons for their musical program on early-day music and entertainment.

Doris Burton introduced the program and told about the music instruments etc. and playing for dances in the early days of the Uinta Basin. She mentioned that many dances were held in homes or schools, churches etc. and the only music often would be the fiddle, sometimes harmonicas or old-time accordions were added. She mentioned some of those early musicians who played such as Dan Adams who played the accordion for dancing in Dry Fork. On Blue Mountain they had a one-room school the cowboys called the Red Onion where dances were held, also at Ralph Reece's house. Clark Feltch and his former wife, Ellen Ramsy played for dances on a banjo.

Doris explained that if they couldn't afford an instrument or have one, they used what they had and Twilla Straight played a number on a pitchfork. Other music was played on saws, Jew's harp, homemade instruments etc. or even some kitchen spoons. With Doris on banjo and Troy the guitar and Tex Ross on the electric guitar, they then played an old-time number "The Old Mule". Doris then told how in Jensen, Johnny Rasmussen, the father of our well-known musicians, the Rasmussen Girls: Marie Hatch, Vena Wardell, and Elna Smith, played for dances. This talented family was taught while young to play various instruments: the piano, the accordion, drums, violin, mandolin and the boys would play the harmonica. Hy Murray played for dances in Davis Ward.

These folks would often travel by team and wagon to play at various places in storms or on muddy roads often not getting home until daylight. Many of these dances lasted the night through and pot luck lunch would be served at midnight intermission. People coming from miles around bringing whole families. George Long then played a number on an old-style accordion like was used for dances. Thelma Thacker on the auto-harp, Dan Thacker on the bass and Jenille

Gardiner on the guitar, Troy Burton the fiddle, Tex Ross and Doris, guitars; they played "Red Wing" with Thelma and Jenille singing.

Doris then played a number using kitchen spoons with Troy playing the mandolin. Doris said that her family and grandchildren were going to play a number but they were home sick in bed and were not able to come. Troy and Doris played a number with Doris on the harmonica also using a glass for muffled sound effect. Deon Price also played on the harmonica, or muff harp as it was called. Doris then told how fiddle playing is very difficult and Troy had to learn by himself. He did a number for us holding the violin on his head with Doris playing the guitar.

Doris mentioned that early bands such as the George Adam's Bank at Jake Workman Hall where many played such as Will Hansen, Al Workman played violin. Often those not having the price of admission brought produce or cedar posts for their ticket. In Naples, George Allred played the violin, his wife the guitar and Abby and Rhoda Goodrich played an organ for dances in the old Reynolds Hall. In Vernal there was the old Orpheus, later known as the Imperial. Abner and Lynn Swain, Willis Johnson, Mart Oaks, Pete Hansen and others played. There was the Burton resort in Ashley, which was built by Troy's grandfather, where dances were held. Some traveled to Wiley's resort in Colorado and the other way was Victory Court. Clarence and Helen Freestone, Tex Ross of the Rhythm Wranglers band, Mary Ross, his wife, played and sang "When The Blue Moon Has Turned to Gold Again" accompanied by Jenille, Tex, Doris and Troy. Other numbers the group performed were "Old Slewfoot" and "Crawdad".

A large group of nearly 50 enjoyed this most interesting and educational program. Thelma Thacker announced that our next meeting would be the second Saturday in April with a program to be given by Laura Chew on the old Outlaw Trail and history of the Chew family. It was mentioned from the audience of the efforts to save the old Uintah Stake Tabernacle. Nina Caldwell mentioned that Central School had had a program on the history of schools and there were still some printed programs left if anyone wanted one. Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

You've heard the minutes, are there any corrections or additions? If not, they'll stand approved as read. Now I think that we'll just turn the time over to Laura to present her program to us. Do you want to use this?

Laura: I guess we went and blew the lights when we were starting this out. I probably brought a little more than what we actually need to talk about today. So anyone that's interested afterward...

The Outlaw Trail, everyone has heard about it, ran from Mexico to Canada. The only part that we know anything about it the little part over in Brown's Park that connected Brown's Park and Echo Park together. The Chews actually used it as a cattle trail or a shortcut to go back and forth from the two different places that they lived in. It's quite a precarious part of the trail.

Much of what we think of as exciting and romantic and adventurous, to the actual people that were living then, were very boring, or not necessarily boring, as [much as] it is monotonous, because you know, if you get on a horse and ride all day long across Blue Mountain, you see a lot of various things, but you don't see an awfully lot of things, because mostly on Blue Mountain it's just sage and not particularly gorgeous unless you get to the right areas. So, a lot of the things that are romantic, they leave out a lot of the hum-drum type things when you are writing or when they are making TV stories or some of these things.

The first time we went was in 1972, and Douglas was, he was about 70 years old, because

he'll be 82 this year, and he took us two years ago when he was 80 and there was ten years in between the two times. That in itself was remarkable for a man that old to take us over this particular trail both times. The first time that we went, the youngest child that we let go was 11 years old. One of them was Arlie Peltier and one of them was Lori Mott, my niece. The rest of the grandchildren that were younger than that we didn't let go because it was too dangerous in the particular area that they were going to go.

The filming isn't done as dramatically as it would have been done in a movie or something like that because they get all these close-ups and they know when they don't have a good picture they can go back the next day and redo it again. Boy, when you're riding along, you don't go back for a lot of retakes because sometimes your heart's in your mouth and even a lot of the pictures that I took looking down many depths don't look that way on the film that I've got because they have a flat look them. They don't have the 3D effect that it was right while we were there.

The reason that the Chews used this little segment of the Outlaw Trail was because it was easier for them. I was talking to Ralph about two weeks ago and then Douglas also. But Douglas was operated on, heart surgery, a month ago, so I haven't really been able to talk to him right at the very last. But I visited with Uncle Ralph and the reason that they used this area, like I said, was because it was a shortcut. It was not easy for them to take livestock over it, so they very seldom did take livestock over this particular [road], other than their riding horses that they were riding. It was easier for them to go up the Yampa River and ford that river seven times between Echo Park and Brown's Park, swim those cattle seven times across the river and follow the river bed when they could, than it was to go on these ledges. You really have to kind of think about why do you appreciate rock ledges.

I've lived with Dean for thirty-two years and I've heard him talk to the boys about when they go riding out in the wintertime looking for sheep or something out in the canyons south of our place, to always remember to be very, very careful on sandstone, because if the snow has come and frozen and made it slick, then if a boy isn't thinking and he goes across some sandstone that just looks like snow, and it's very slick, his horse will fall. And if it's a drop-off of twenty, thirty or seventy-five feet. You know, you could break a horse's leg and probably hurt yourself real bad too. One thing you always do on slide-rock, whether it's covered with snow or in the summertime like when we went, is, you always, whenever you have to change from one shelf to another...and by shelves, I mean, if you know how our formations go up canyons where there's a little dirt and there's sage growing on them and cedars, well these cowboys wanted to get, if they followed this one rock up there, pretty soon it would peter out and it wouldn't go any farther. So, they either had to back their horses up or turn them around which they couldn't do. So, they had to know where to jump from that shelf up to the next shelf and then ride along it a little ways and then jump up to the next shelf and then come back this ways a little ways then jump up to the next shelf and then go back and always keep working toward Brown's Park or vice versa.

This is why the outlaws could get away, because they knew where to go and the other men had to look for tracks or scratch marks on the rocks that way. That's why they could use this as an escape route. Plus it was in the three-corner area of Wyoming and Colorado and Utah. So, it's quite a significant area. But the thing that I was going to tell you that you always do on slide-rock or snow on rock is you always have your horse either go straight up them or straight down them. You never take them, like if this is a sliding rock here, you never ride your horse across

there because his feet would just go out from under him and he'd fall. So, you make them go up and they just kind of dig like a cat and they just keep a-going and you're not riding, of course, because they've just got to go and if you're in their way they're going to walk right on your back.

When they come down, they just brace their front feet and just slide right on their haunches. A lot of times they'll take all the hide off from them, but they don't break a leg by doing it that way. Of course, you and I, we'd go out and we wouldn't do that, we'd probably have a wreck the first time.

OK, John Royal Chew, Auntie Nola Chew Burdick wrote this for me in February.

John Hoyal Chew immigrated to the United States from his birth place in Langshire England in 1864 accompanied by his mother, Phoebe Hoyal Chew, and his youngest sister, Eliza Jane. They were preceded by his maternal grandfather, John Hoyal, in 1853 and his grandmother, May Davis Hoyal, in 1854. At the time when John Hoyal and Jack Chew married, he married Mamie Metcalf on July 9, 1881, and it lasted until her death on December 17, 1950. It produced fourteen children beginning with Ethel, who was born in 1882, and ending with Burton and he was born in 1909.

During the years 1881 and 1890, Jack Chew made a living for his family chiefly by herding the community cattle in the Gunnison area and other frontier activities such as cutting, hauling posts, building corrals, sheds and so forth, breaking horses and branding livestock. Sometime during the later years of 1890, a decision was made to move the Burglan horses and cattle to Colorado. Mr. Burglan is who John Hoyal and Jack Chew worked for. They decided to move the cattle and horses to Colorado where range conditions were thought to be better.

In 1899, the slow process of moving the stock was started with the help of Alex Beck, a nephew of Burglan, and Harry Chew, who was 14, and Mark Chew, who was 12 1/2, through Salina Canyon, Castle Valley, Wellington, Nine Mile Canyon to Myton to Vernal via Diamond Mountain and then on into Brown's Park by mid-year of 1901.

Later that year, the cattle were trailed to Slater Park, Colorado, and sold to the Green Cattle Co. Jack had the option of buying the Burglan horses and so he did this. He bought his horses and the cattle, then they turned them out on the range then they were pretty much left to shift for themselves. The horses did pretty well, but the cattle didn't do so well because this was new and strange country for them. [She's got here in the margin, 1901 or 1902.]

Sometime during this period, Jack and Mary Chew decided that the place, which became known as Currant Springs, was suitable for homesteading. There was a small spring nearby plus two seeps in the canyon that might be encouraged to produce, and two small reservoirs were built to hold the spring runoff and to store

some of the water. Douglas was born here in that first summer, in 1902. He was born at the foot of the Douglas Mountain and that's why his mother named him Douglas. They had a dugout down country, about four miles in a northeasterly direction. It was at least 1000 feet lower, so they moved down there in the wintertime because it was warmer. They'd go from Currant Springs down to this warmer area to spend the winter part. Nola was born there in 1903 and a girl baby, they named her Madge, she was born stillborn in March of 1906.

The thing that I think has been remarkable about the Chews is that they have talked about this baby, Madge, that was a stillborn baby, just like she was a member of the family. On the first trip we went, they went and made a marker, a grave marker, and a little fence where she lies. The way this family has included this child as one of their brothers and sisters has really been surprising to me.

In 1910, squatters' rights to the Pearl Creek place was purchased from the Chews in August from Charlie Moran. Aunt Nola said, "I wondered out loud one day to Rile in 1972 how Dad found the trail into Pat's Hole from Douglas Mountain. He told me that there were a number of old-timers on both sides of the Yampa River who he was acquainted with that knew this Indian trail and that they had told him about it."

I was talking to Opal here, and she said that she always understood that Grandfather saw this Pool Basin country down there in Pool Creek from one of the canyon rims and made a decision that he wanted to go into that country, then he found out from these old-timers how to get into there. Then he went and bought the squatters' rights from it.

After they decided, some of the boys decided they'd put a boat in the river in March and see if they couldn't float from Brown's Park down to this Echo Park, and if they could, then they were going to put all their household things on it. Of course, they ran into the rapids and all the other things and got dumped and lost their food and almost caught pneumonia, and had one of them walk down river to Pool Creek and the other one came back to one of their camps. They decided that wasn't the way to go, so this is how they finally had to go. She said that later in the spring of 1910 when Father, Mother, Ralph and I were on the first load of furniture and household gear moved by wagon, we had to go from Dummy Bottoms in Brown's Park via Sunbeam, Maybell, Elk Springs, Skull Creek, across Blue Mountain to the jumping-off place.

They called the jumping-off place where, if you go up on Blue Mountain, you go to Harper's Corner and you look off towards Echo Park, and Park has a sign there called the Chew Boy Road. That's what they called the jumping-off place. She said:

We just took off on that rim and they drug some cedar posts behind them to keep from having their wagons go too fast because there wasn't any road there at that

time. She said that later in 1911 most of us that were school age returned to Dummy Bottoms over the Outlaw Trail. We started school in the brand new schoolhouse which is presently used as a community center. In the cemetery close by is William Chew, their grandfather, who died there. Ethel came home from wherever she'd been working and brought smallpox to the family. We were quarantined for the rest of the school year into 1912.

I think that that was all I was going to tell you about that Aunt Nola had written to me this winter and it included somewhat of the Outlaw Trail. Her son, Mike Lewis, was insistent that we take this second trip on Outlaw Trail because he wanted to do some filming. So we filmed it and he's put it together, kind of like a movie sort of a thing. I hope you can all see this and I hope you can all understand it. I'm going to forego the slides for right now, that was our first trip, and just go right on into the videotape that he's made, which is very similar to a television program or something. So if some of you need to shift chairs or whatever to see it, well it'll be alright. Over here I have pictures of our last trip. I took some more pictures because I went on the last trip. I got left on the first trip. My little girl put them together at a school picture history project. We can move in the other side if anyone is interested to look at them after we get through here.

end.